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H.R. 5480 – The Ending Childhood Hunger Challenge Act

Background

- Nearly one in four U.S. children (16.7 million) is at-risk of hunger.
- While hunger affects people of all ages, it is particularly devastating for children. Even short-term episodes of hunger can cause lasting damage to a child's development, increasing the risk for cognitive, behavioral, and physical problems.
- At the same time that child hunger is afflicting families across the nation, millions of children are not enrolled in federally funded nutrition programs they are eligible for. Of the 19.5 million low-income kids receiving free or reduced price lunch in school each day, less than half (46%) receive breakfast and only 11% participate in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Some of these children cannot participate because their community does not provide the program. For every 100 school lunch programs there are just 87 breakfast programs and 34 summer food service program sites.
- Other children lack transportation to programs, or their families are unaware that they are eligible or that a program exists in their community.
- President Obama has set an ambitious goal of ending child hunger by 2015. With significant, targeted investments, this goal is achievable, but it requires states' commitment to expand children's access to critical nutrition programs through public-private partnerships and innovative strategies.
- In addition to the federal policy changes and investments that Congress must undertake in the upcoming reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, states need to partner with the federal government and the private sector in fighting child hunger by strengthening collaboration and improving coordination.

What the Childhood Hunger Challenge Act does:

- Encourages states to make progress against child hunger by implementing innovative strategies to improve program access and breaking down barriers that prevent programs from reaching all eligible children.
- Creates a new competitive grant program to provide states with the tools and resources they need to carry out comprehensive and innovative plans to end childhood hunger by 2015.
- Supports demonstration projects to enhance benefits or provide innovative program delivery models in federal nutrition programs; increases access and participation in federal nutrition programs; and improves the coordination of federal, state, and community efforts to combat hunger.
- Promotes projects that employ a comprehensive and innovative strategy to reduce child hunger; includes a public-private partnership among public and private stakeholders that requires a collaborative planning process that results in a detailed project plan; specific performance goals and annual assessments to measure progress; and an independent evaluation of the impact of project activities on child food insecurity to hold states accountable for results.

Supporting Organizations

- Share Our Strength and the Alliance to End Hunger